

BrainPower

Brief Program Description

Educators and researchers alike have turned their attention to developing effective means for reducing excessive displays of childhood aggression in school settings. Evidence has suggested that attribution retraining might successfully reduce childhood aggression by reducing or eliminating biased judgments of a peer's intent. The BrainPower Program is founded on two fundamental assumptions: aggressive children can learn to recognize accidental causes in interactions with peers; and when negative outcomes are attributed to accidental, i.e., nonhostile causes, anger and aggression will become unlikely.

There are three primary components to BrainPower. The primary, and largest, component was designed to strengthen aggressive children's ability to accurately detect intentionality. The second component of the intervention was designed to increase the likelihood that aggressive children would make attributions to nonhostile intent when negative encounters with peers were perceived as ambiguous. The third component elaborated on the meaning of intentionality in the context of linking appropriate behavioral responses to ambiguously caused negative outcomes.

Program Strategies

The curriculum of the intervention provided: 1) specific activities for understanding the concepts of intent and ambiguity in interpersonal interactions; 2) practice in identifying intentionality in others; 3) specific activities for distinguishing between intended and unintended outcomes; and 4) practice in making attributions and generating decision rules about how to respond given attributional uncertainty.

The curriculum utilized a variety of strategies including role-play, discussion of personal experiences, and brainstorming.

Population Focus

The population focus was elementary school children in Southern California.

Suitable Settings

This intervention is suitable for implementation in a school setting.

Required Resources

Required resources include the BrainPower Program materials and activities.

Implementation Timeline

Groups of students met twice weekly in 60-minute sessions, for a total of 12 lessons, in six weeks.

Outcomes

Evaluation of this program revealed the following:

- Post-intervention, African-American boys in the intervention group significantly altered their judgments in the direction of less perceived intentionality.
- Post-intervention, African-American boys in the intervention group reported significantly less anger than the experimental group.
- Post-intervention, African-American boys in the experimental group were rated by their teachers as significantly less aggressive.

Contact Information

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

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